
Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

City of Fargo, North Dakota

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Table of Contents

THE ISSUE OF FAIR HOUSING	1
2010 ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS	2
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	2
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF FARGO	3
<i>Population</i>	3
<i>Households</i>	3
<i>Age</i>	4
<i>Race and Ethnicity</i>	4
<i>Education</i>	4
<i>Public Transportation</i>	5
<i>Employment</i>	5
<i>Income</i>	5
<i>Public Assistance</i>	6
<i>Housing</i>	7
<i>Fair Housing Complaints</i>	7
<i>Homelessness</i>	8
SUMMARY OF IMPEDIMENTS	10
ACTIONS TO ADDRESS IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE	12
FAIR HOUSING EDUCATION AND ANALYSIS	12
NEIGHBORHOOD DIVERSITY	13
FAIR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT	14
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	14
ACCESSIBLE HOUSING	16
BIBLIOGRAPHY	19
APPENDIX A - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	21

The Issue of Fair Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires each entitlement jurisdiction to certify that it is in compliance with the Consolidated Plan Final Rule, published in the Federal Register (24 CFR91.225). The Consolidated Plan is a document prepared by the City's Department of Planning and Development and serves as:

- A housing and community development planning document;
- A strategy to be followed in carrying out HUD programs;
- An action plan that provides a basis for assessing performance; and
- An application for the City for the following HUD grant programs:
 - The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME)
 - The Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 required that all HUD programs be administered in a manner that will "*affirmatively further fair housing.*" Although the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) itself is not directly approved or denied, it is a HUD-mandated document. As such, the Consolidated Plan requires each entitlement jurisdiction to show its commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing choice by:

- Conducting an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice;
- Taking appropriate actions to overcome the effects of impediments identified through that analysis; and
- Maintaining records that reflect the analysis and actions.

According to HUD, impediments to fair housing choice are:

- Any actions, omissions, or decisions *taken because* of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin which restrict housing choices or the availability of housing choices.
- Any actions, omissions, or decisions which have the effect of restricting housing choices or the availability of housing choices *on the basis* of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin.

Subsequently, the Analysis of Impediments document is the HUD established measure of fair housing for CDBG grantees and is intended to serve as:

- A comprehensive review of the City's laws, regulations, administrative policies, procedures and practices with regard to fair housing in Fargo;
- An assessment of how those laws, regulations, policies, and procedures affect the location, availability, and accessibility of housing; and
- An assessment of public and private sector conditions affecting fair housing choice.

2010 Analysis of Impediments

HUD's directive is that the Analysis of Impediments serve as the substantive, logical basis for fair housing planning and provide essential and detailed information to policy makers, administrative staff, housing providers, lenders and fair housing advocates. In its Fair Housing Planning Guide, HUD emphasizes that "although the grantee's AFFH (Affirmatively Further Fair Housing) obligation arises in connection with the receipt of Federal funding, its AFFH obligation is not restricted to the design and operation of HUD-funded programs at the state or local level. The AFFH obligation extends to all housing-related activities in the grantee's jurisdictional area whether publicly or privately funded."¹

In addition, HUD believes the AI should assist in building public support for fair housing efforts both within the City's boundaries and beyond. "The principles embodied in the concept of 'fair housing' are fundamental to healthy communities, and communities must be encouraged and supported to include real, effective fair housing strategies in their overall planning and development process, not only because it is the law, but because it is the right thing to do."²

In compliance with HUD's directive, the City of Fargo is committed to promoting fair housing choice in an affirmative manner. This commitment was demonstrated in 1996, when the City conducted its initial Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The 1996 AI demonstrated that the City has taken affirmative steps to further fair housing and identified additional action steps that the City would implement to improve fair housing choices.

This document serves as an update to the 1996 and 2002 AI. Overall, the updated analysis indicates that the City continues to do well in its efforts to avoid systematic impediments to fair housing. However, the updated analysis has been revised to address additional barriers, opportunities and action steps to further fair housing choice in Fargo.

Research Methodology

In order to complete the updated Analysis of Impediments, Planning and Development staff studied 2000, 2008 and 2009 Census data, examined public and private sector policies, completed an assessment of housing discrimination complaints and conducted one-on-one interviews targeting various fair housing practitioners (service providers, advocates, local government officials) about actual and potential impediments to fair housing.

Planning and Development staff then prepared a draft report and submitted it to the Fargo Human Relations Commission for comment, and also to the public at large (see Appendix A). Additionally,

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, *Fair Housing Planning Guide*. Washington, D.C.: March 1996, p. 1-3

² Ibid.

Fargo has received technical assistance and advice from staff at the Federal Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

Demographic Profile of Fargo

The purpose of the Analysis of Impediments document is to provide essential and detailed information so policymakers, administrative staff and housing advocates can have a thorough understanding of the availability, accessibility and affordability of housing. It is especially important to identify circumstances that may impede minority and low income community members from obtaining fair housing based on their race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin. Many individuals suffering discrimination under these bases tend to earn low and moderate incomes, and encounter a greater number of housing impediments than the majority population. In order to undertake positive actions to eliminate impediments to fair housing choice, awareness of existing demographics and potential impediments is key.

Population

Figures from the American Community Survey 2008 indicate that 96,293 people live in Fargo, a 6.3% increase from 90,599 in 2000. Fargo's land area is 39.56 miles, making it the largest and most populous city in North Dakota.

Year	Population
1960	47,000
1970	53,365
1980	61,383
1990	74,115
2000	90,599
2008	96,293

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Households

The number of households in Fargo increased by 14% between the years of 2000 and 2008 (from 39,268 to 44,832). In addition, the Fargo Housing Authority owns over 600 public housing units and maintains a waiting list of up to 2,000 families (up from approximately 1,000 in 2002). On any given month, around 1,200 section 8 vouchers are distributed in Fargo. The availability of housing vouchers is becoming more limited each year.

An assessment of housing affordability by housing occupations completed by the North Dakota Housing Finance Administration³ concludes that residents in North Dakota with service oriented jobs have difficulty renting or buying a home, especially if they are living on their own. The report uses the example of a cashier, who, at a median monthly wage of \$1,331, can afford only 73% of the average rent payment for a 2 bedroom apartment. Even

³ ND Housing Finance Agency, *State of Affordable Housing in North Dakota*. Bismarck, ND: 2008

with a second wage earner in the household, a Cashier (and a Child Care Worker, a Retail Salesperson and a Social Security Beneficiary) would not be able to afford the \$1,067 monthly payment on a home of average sales price.

Age

2008 Census data shows that 25% of the population is under age 20 and 10% are age 65 or over. The median age in Fargo is 30.4 years. Demographic data indicates that between now and 2020, ND will see a considerable increase in the senior population, age 65 and older. This increase will significantly reduce state tax revenues, as elders age out of the workforce and are no longer wage earners. Richard Rathge, in *The Economic Impact of the Senior Population on a State's Economy: The Case of North Dakota*, suggests that one solution is to encourage seniors to stay in the workforce as long as possible. But to do this there needs to be adequate housing available; housing that is affordable and has access to medical services, transportation and social services.

Race and Ethnicity

2009 Census Data reports that minority populations in Fargo make up 10.4% of the population.

Race/Ethnicity	Population		
White	85,610	89.6%	89.6%
Black/African American	3,103	3.2%	10.4%
Native American	2,276	2.4%	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,561	2.7%	
Other/Multiracial	2,018	2.1%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 ACS

Education

Fargo School District data shows 10,370 students were enrolled in Fargo public schools in 2010. The latest information regarding graduation in the Fargo School District shows a graduation rate of 85% and an attendance rate of 95% in the 2009-10 school year.⁴

In addition, there are five colleges/universities in the Fargo Moorhead metropolitan area -- North Dakota State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Concordia College, Rasmussen College and Aaker's Business College.

⁴ ND Department of Public Education, Fargo Public School District #1 Profile, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/profile/0910/AYPDistrict/09001.pdf>

Public Transportation

The local public transportation system is comprised of the Metro Area Transit bus system (MAT), which includes paratransit service, Amtrak rail service and Hector International Airport. There has been a concerted effort by the MAT, the City of Fargo and its affiliated metropolitan planning agency "MetroCOG" to explore ways in which the FM community's public transportation system can best meet the needs of low income, disabled and minority populations. Additional information on the Metropolitan Transportation Initiative (MTI) can be found on page 17 of this document.

Employment

The unemployment rate in Fargo in June 2010 was 4.1%⁵, a much lower percentage than most parts of the Nation during this time. This compares to a national rate of 9.6%, which highlights a strong local economy that is resilient to the recent downturn in the nation-wide economy. In 2000, Fargo's unemployment rate was 2.7%. The percentage of persons in the labor force in Fargo-Moorhead remained roughly the same between the years of 2000 and 2008 (about 75%).⁶

Income

Census data shows the median household income in Fargo was \$35,510 in 1999 and \$40,757 in 2008, an increase of 14.8%. While average earnings and median incomes have been rising, Fargo still has a substantial number of low-income residents. In 2008, nearly 30% of households earned less than \$25,000/year (\$12 per hour):⁷

- ✓ 4,214 households (9.4%) earned an average wage below \$5/hour
- ✓ 3,093 households (6.9%) earned an average between \$5 and \$7/hour
- ✓ 5,873 households earned between \$7 and \$12/hour

In the 2000's, much of the community's employment growth occurred in the professional and management sectors, which tend to have relatively high wages.⁸ While this is likely to account in part for the nearly 15% increase in household income, it appears to indicate a widening gap between middle/higher income earners and those making less than \$25,000 per year.

It should also be noted that many of Fargo's households with low incomes are composed of students that attend local universities and colleges. Students themselves may have "low incomes" but are considered a separate category of "low income households" since their low

⁵ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/web/metro/laummtrk.htm>

⁶ Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey

⁷ Census 2008 American Community Survey, Table S1901

⁸ Census 2000 table QT-P29 and 2008 ACS Table S2407

income status tends to be temporary and/or their parents or other forms of education-related financial aid may assist with rent and other expenses.

Minorities within the City of Fargo tend to have lower incomes than the majority population. The following chart utilizing information from the 2000 Census illustrates the disparity between incomes of minority vs. majority groups. When people of lower income are unable to obtain fair housing, the effect is compounded on those of the minority population.

Household Income Disparity between White and Other Races in Fargo

	White	Black/Af. American	Asian	Other Races	Hispanic/Latino
Total	37,528	298	504	136	339
Income is \$25,000 or less	12,345	111	267	63	154
%	32%	37%	53%	46%	45%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau sample data, 2000

Public Assistance

In 2009, there were 18,141 recipients of public assistance via TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, Child Care assistance or LIHEAP or a combination of these programs through Cass County Social Services – 18.3% of North Dakota’s total allocation.⁹

Cass County Economic Assistance Recipients - FY 2009

Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) recipients	1,905
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients	13,897
Medicaid recipients	14,318
Child Care Assistance recipients	1,641
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) recipients	6,170
Total <i>unduplicated</i> count of recipients of public assistance¹⁰	18,141

⁹ ND Department of Human Services, FY 2009 Unduplicated Counts of Recipients and Cases by County of Physical Residence

¹⁰ Note: Many of these recipients are receiving at least one or a combination of the economic assistance services

Housing

The North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA) indicates that both homeownership and housing rental are becoming less affordable throughout the state, in most part due to the inability of household incomes to keep up with skyrocketing housing prices.

NDHFA's 2008 *Report on the State of Affordable Housing in North Dakota* reports that home values increased 20.5% from 2005 to 2007, while households experienced income growth of only 6.6%. This is in stark contrast to 2000 through 2005, where the growth of home values and income kept an even pace. While the housing market in ND did not inflate to the level seen in other areas of the country, low and fixed income residents continue to confront housing affordability issues.

The housing that low and fixed income residents require is often referred to as "Workforce Housing." Research performed by the Fargo Workforce Housing Coalition indicates that Workforce Housing is hard to come by for many. For example, to afford a two-bedroom apartment (fair market rent of \$628) a household would need to earn a combined wage of \$13/hour, using the standard definition of affordability (a household should spend no more than 30% of gross income on housing). At this income level, a household could also afford to purchase a home for \$80,000. Almost half of the metro area workforce is employed in non-professional service occupations. The typical wage for these 50,000 workers ranges from \$7.11/hour (food prep and service) to \$13.13/hour (protective service).¹¹

The rate of new construction within the City of Fargo appears to have slightly declined since 2005.¹² New dwelling permits have dropped 31% for the period of 2005-2009. On the other hand, remodeling projects in the same period have seen an 11% increase. More than likely, this is due in part to the national housing market recession to which Fargo is not immune. The increase in remodeling projects can be taken as a positive sign; increasing the availability and quality of lower cost housing in the City's older neighborhoods. Housing in many of these older neighborhoods is, as a result, receiving much needed upgrades after a significant period of gradual decline.

Fair Housing Complaints

Since January 2010, the North Dakota Department of Labor has opened 28 fair housing complaints and closed 21. These complaints originate from locations throughout the state of North Dakota. Data from the 2007-2009 Biennial Report shows that Burleigh and Cass County receive the greatest number of housing-related complaints, with 46 and 29 claims closed, respectively.

In addition, 2008 information from Fair Housing of the Dakotas indicates that Fargo leads the state in the numbers of general housing questions and fair housing allegations. Of 1,712 state-wide general inquiries, Fargo was responsible for 426. Fargo was the source of 36 fair housing allegations out of 141 statewide. Statewide, general inquiries were even with 2007,

¹¹ City of Fargo, *Workforce Housing in Fargo*. Fargo, ND: August 2010

¹² City of Fargo, ND, *Building Permit Summary Report for the period 1/1/05-12/31/10*

and there was a slight increase in fair housing allegations. The cities of Bismarck and Grand Forks were second and third in numbers of both general inquiries and fair housing allegations.

Homelessness

Although Fargo is a community where housing is generally affordable (i.e. rental housing costs within the City are comparative to regional affordable rents published by HUD annually), the number of homeless individuals continues to rise. In addition, data released in a 2009 study by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation reveals significant percentage increases in many of the factors that long have been known to contribute to the risk for homelessness. Many of these factors are illustrated in the following charts.

Since 2000, Fargo has seen an increase in the numbers of homeless persons accompanied by children. These families increasingly have little to no income to pay for rent, and must utilize shelters and subsidized housing at an increasing rate. Military Veterans make up 34% of the general homeless population, and 47% of the male homeless population. 43% of the respondents in the Wilder survey reported having significant mental illness. The data makes clear the complex nature of homelessness and its many causes.

<u>2009 Wilder Study of FM Area Homeless Individuals¹³</u>	2000	2003	2006	2009
	(N=106)	(N=179)	(N=281)	(N=408)
Men who have children with them	0%	1%	2%	3%
Employed full-time	19%	18%	15%	13%
No source of income	6%	16%	16%	20%
Received care in an emergency room in previous 6 months	33%	30%	34%	38%
Military Veterans	25%	19%	25%	34%
Military Veterans (men only)	39%	29%	36%	47%
Could not pay anything for rent	21%	24%	22%	39%
Reported significant mental illness	38%	41%	44%	43%

The chart below points to a number of additional indicators highlighting the problem of homelessness in Fargo. The data indicates that a disproportionate number of individuals and families who become homeless are minorities and low income persons who have no source of income due to job loss.

<u>2009 Homelessness Indicators</u>	2009
	(N=408)
Persons of Color	38%
Women who have children with them	36%
Complete high school diploma or GED	82%
Unemployed for more than 12 months (of those who are unemployed)	42%
Homeless for at least one year	45%
Meets the federal definition of chronic homelessness	46%
Left last housing to flee abuse (women only)	38%
Physically mistreated as a child	34%
Sexually mistreated as a child	20%
Ever in foster care	29%
Lived in alcohol or drug treatment facility in previous two years	19%
Incarcerated within the last two years	21%
Has serious mental, physical or other condition that limits the amount or kind of work they can do	38%
Has serious mental, physical or other condition that interferes with memory or daily decision making	21%
Has a history that suggests likely brain injury	32%

¹³ Wilder Research Center, *Homeless Adults and their Children in Fargo, ND and Moorhead, MN*. Saint Paul, MN: September 2009

Summary of Impediments

Analysis of both qualitative and quantitative information on fair housing in Fargo leads to the following list of impediments to fair housing choice in this community.

Education

Individuals often times lack information on fair housing, specifically regarding their rights and their responsibilities on housing issues. Particularly affected are members of the minority community, including refugees and recent immigrants to the United States. Many impediments to fair housing could be addressed if people were better informed.

Historic Isolation

The pattern of modern housing developments has effectively segregated people by income in many areas of the community. In some cases, it relates to the location of public housing and in others it is the patterns of private sector housing development that contribute to this isolation. Because of their greater tendency toward lower income, minority groups (including those of minority races, ethnicities and persons with disabilities) are disproportionately affected by historic isolation.

NIMBY

As in many areas of the country, community resistance to the integration of diverse types of housing into existing neighborhoods continues to grow in Fargo. The Planning Commission and City Commission deal with “not-in-my-back-yard” arguments on a routine basis, relating to everything from the location of bike trails to group homes for persons with mental disabilities or the homeless. Housing for the elderly, a rapidly growing population in Fargo, has also seen resistance. The difficulties developers encounter when trying to site special needs housing facilities definitely have an impact on fair housing choice. The siting battle (or even the potential of a long and protracted battle) can influence the selection of a site and can even determine whether or not a housing project ever gets off the ground. The NIMBY phenomenon effectively impedes the development of housing benefiting the elderly, disabled persons, minorities and low income families, and limits fair housing options for all of these groups.

Affordability

While the cost of construction and/or the rising cost of housing rehab is outpacing income and limiting housing choice, the way subdivisions are developed also has an impact on the cost of housing and segregation of individuals by income. The creation of a variety of types of lots for residential development is the first step in facilitating construction of new affordable housing, which has a direct impact on the community’s ability to develop diversity within its neighborhoods. The need for “Workforce” housing could

be addressed with a greater focus on the development of diverse housing types. Again, minority populations often bear the brunt of limited affordable housing. Limited access to housing vouchers, jobs with a livable wage and workforce housing all create a difficult scenario for low income and minority populations.

Accessibility

The economic feasibility of retrofitting existing apartment buildings for accessibility can be seen as an impediment to fair housing choice for disabled residents of the community. Consistent integration of accessibility enhancements in newly constructed rental housing is also important to fair housing choice.

Transportation

A lack of transportation options continues to be a problem for many low and moderate income residents who may not live near a bus route. Fargo has expanded at a brisk rate since 2000, and maintaining transit routes that keep pace with this development is a challenge. Locating affordable housing where access to public transportation is limited reduces housing options for people who need access to public transportation.

Actions to Address Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

The 2010 analysis indicates that Fargo continues to do well in avoiding systematic impediments to fair housing choice. However, the City recognizes that barriers to fair housing exist and will pursue the following steps to continue to "affirmatively further fair housing choice."

Fair Housing Education and Analysis

Fair housing is not a principle that has achieved universal support in Fargo. Further, many residents do not have knowledge about their fair housing rights, how to recognize discrimination or what to do about it. The City will:

1. Continue to support consumer educational programs such as first-time homebuyer and ongoing fair housing presentations and training
2. Participate in fair housing education efforts for City employees and CDBG subgrantees
3. Continue to provide information to the public on the City's housing programs via the website, brochures, newsletters and public events
4. Continue to support fair housing through its affordable housing activities
 - Provide support to agencies attempting to better affordable housing opportunities in Fargo
 - Partner with the Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FHRA) and Beyond Shelter, Inc. to create and maintain affordable housing opportunities for low and extremely low income households
5. Continue to support agencies that assist the homeless
6. Continue to provide information to the public on tenant/landlord rights and laws, with a particular focus on better informing the recent refugee and immigrant population.
7. Continue to make fair housing and equal opportunity information available throughout the City (Fargo Human Relations Commission (FHRC), Planning Department, Mayor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, etc)
8. Actively support Fair Housing Month activities
9. Study how government regulations may be the cause of institutional impediments to fair housing
 - Zoning regulations on density, lot size and number of unrelated tenants
 - Parking
 - Criminal background checks

- Building code requirements
 - Non-traditional families
 - Rental inspections
10. Work to identify fair housing issues in the community
 - Incorporate fair housing issues and concerns into the annual goals and objectives set forth by the Fargo Human Relations Commission
 - Continue to utilize the Human Relations Commission's complaint intake process/database to gather information from citizens on fair housing complaints and concerns

Neighborhood Diversity

Historical isolation of public housing has resulted in a higher number of low income people living in concentrated geographic areas. The City will:

1. Continue to support FHRA's efforts to deconcentrate public housing by selling existing units to public housing tenants and building new affordable housing units in other areas of the City
2. Study and support transportation improvements, including paratransit for individuals with disabilities and bus route enhancements that will meet the needs low income people throughout the City
3. Develop specific actions to create and encourage mixed income neighborhoods throughout the community

Individuals with disabilities, some of whom are homeless, frequently face barriers to housing choice in the form of neighborhood opposition to group homes or community living centers. Low income residents and residents of color may also face barriers to housing choice in the form of neighborhood opposition to publicly assisted housing. The City will:

1. Support efforts to reduce public opposition to group living facilities
2. Create materials for the City to distribute when residents call to complain about new or existing group homes
3. Provide information on and support for enforcement of fair housing laws to help deter future efforts to block group homes, publicly assisted housing and other locally unwanted land uses
4. Develop a formal process that encourages the use of alternative dispute resolution to help service providers and neighborhoods reconcile differences over group home issues

5. Continue work to provide affordable housing for anyone that needs it (including the homeless and people with mental disabilities)

Fair Housing Enforcement

To remain "substantially equivalent" to the HUD administrative enforcement process, the North Dakota Department of Labor must fully investigate cases that are not resolved through conciliation and bring enforcement action when evidence warrants. The City will:

1. Maintain a Human Relations Commission that will respond to and follow up on matters relating to illegal discrimination, including housing discrimination, in addition to providing education and resources on fair housing issues and public forums for citizens to report housing discrimination
2. Continue to support fair housing testing to ensure that fair housing laws are enforced and meritorious cases are brought forward
3. Increase coordinated efforts between the ND Department of Labor, ND Fair Housing Council and US Department of Housing and Urban Development to gather and share information related to fair housing issues

Affordable Housing

Affordability is clearly a barrier to housing choice and becomes a fair housing issue when housing patterns and/or policies effectively segregate households by income. Availability (both new and existing units) of affordable housing has been an increasing challenge in Fargo, both in rental and ownership situations. The inability of household income to keep pace with the annual rise in housing costs presents additional challenges.

Overall, the City's approach is to be deliberate and measured in developing a local housing policy, and to have flexible programs/resources that can respond to changing local needs. In order to accomplish that goal, the City is developing many approaches that reflect the varying circumstances and conditions of individual neighborhoods and will attempt to measure both the social and financial returns of housing actions taken.

Generally speaking, Fargo's approach to addressing housing issues will focus on local regulatory review, coordination and development of local financing alternatives, in addition to enhancing partnerships with state government. The City will consider and evaluate the following possibilities:

1. Review taxation policies to determine affect on housing affordability
 - Use PILOT incentives to offset additional construction costs associated with "good housing" and associated property taxes
 - Provide non-profits with property tax exemptions for affordable housing development

- Assess subsidized/assisted affordable housing projects based on income as opposed to value
 - Address “economies of scale” issue by creating a tax incentive so smaller projects don’t pay proportionally more than larger projects
 - Develop policy on use of Tax Increment Financing districts for infill housing development
2. Review zoning policies to determine affect on housing affordability and new neighborhood development
 - Examine zoning requirements for the redevelopment of “non-conforming” infill residential land
 - Make allowances in the City Code for mixed density/mixed income residential developments
 - Actively promote creative use of the Land Development Code to facilitate affordable and diverse housing development
 3. Review building code/inspection policies to determine impacts on housing affordability
 - Impact of building codes on rehabilitation of historic residential properties
 - Efficacy of rental housing inspection program in improving the quality of housing
 4. Revitalize older neighborhoods by tackling issues associated with “difficult” properties
 - Consistent and aggressive housing code enforcement
 - Continue to fund the NRI infill program, to acquire and clear scattered infill lots
 - Continue to utilize Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds as available for the purchase and rehabilitation of abandoned, foreclosed and neglected properties
 - Develop a land banking program that would allow for the accumulation of property in older neighborhoods, with the intent of bundling cleared land for higher density residential development
 - Aggressively pursue acquisition and redevelopment of tax delinquent properties
 - Participate in the HUD Revitalization Area program, purchasing HUD homes at a 50% discount
 - Develop TIF policies to address housing needs when appropriate
 5. Continue to develop additional housing opportunities in and around downtown
 - Actively promote Renaissance Zone incentives for housing, encouraging an income-diverse housing environment
 - Continue to fund affordable housing development opportunities in partnership with the Fargo Housing and Development Authority using HOME funds.
 6. Encourage maintenance of existing neighborhood housing stock
 - Continue to fund the NRI Existing Rehab program
 - Continue to fund HUD owner occupied rehab – target grants to households <50% AMI and loans to households 50-80% AMI

- Provide homeowners with information on the range of options available for rehab, including private lender products, historic rehab tax credits, city remodeling tax exemptions, etc
7. Encourage the dispersion of affordable housing throughout the community
 - Participate with the state in evaluating low income housing tax credit proposals, addressing both design and concentration issues
 - Work with the Community Development Committee to encourage the development of mixed-income, sustainable neighborhood housing in new neighborhoods.
 8. Address issues related to the affordability of homeownership
 - Continue to fund downpayment assistance program
 - Encourage middle income homebuyers to use NDHFA Start program where appropriate
 - Support the establishment of additional rent-to-own subdivisions, similar to the FHRA's Bluestem Housing Development
 - Encourage utilization of the Section 8 homeownership program managed by HUD
 - Support the development of "workforce housing" that is affordable to nearly half of the metro area workforce having non-professional service occupations
 - Encourage job growth that enhances opportunities for more people to receive a sustainable, livable wage
 9. Create new high quality affordable housing opportunities for local renters
 - Encourage developers to utilize Fannie Mae/State Bank multi-family financing products
 - Offer blended rate financing to developers that build high quality housing designed to serve households under 120% of median income
 - Ask NDHFA to allocate private activity bonds for multi-family development
 - Use HOME to fund gap financing for affordable multi-family housing development
 10. Develop a local housing trust fund that is both sustainable and self-perpetuating

Accessible Housing

People with disabilities have difficulty finding suitable and accessible housing. Even though the Fair Housing Act allows tenants to make physical modifications to render an apartment accessible, fixed or otherwise limited incomes present a financial barrier to a disabled person's ability to make physical modifications, and thus, is a barrier to the creation of accessible housing in Fargo. The City will:

1. Educate developers, non-profit organizations and architects about ways they can enhance the accessibility of existing units and increase the availability of accessible units
2. Systematically inform residents about their right to reasonable accommodations under fair housing law

3. Conduct a review of studies or, if necessary, an independent analysis on housing costs of making homes more accessible for persons living with a physical disability
4. Consider using CDBG funds to assist persons with disabilities in making modifications to inaccessible rental units or homes owned by eligible households.
5. Consider creating incentives for property owners of housing built before 1991 to make their rental units physically accessible to persons with disabilities

Transportation

Public transportation options, including major bus routes, are not always available in every section of the City. Some neighborhoods' lack of access to public transportation can act as a barrier to obtaining housing, especially if a household is dependent on the bus as a means to travel between home and work. In order to ensure the proper coordination of housing development and transit options, the City will:

1. Continue to coordinate efforts with the City of Moorhead, City of West Fargo, and City of Dilworth through the Metro Area Transit (MAT) Coordinating Board regarding route planning and transit management.
2. Work in cooperation with the Metro Transportation Initiative Committee (MTI) to address identified barriers to transit in the areas of Job Access and Human Services Transportation. MTI is a consortium of local municipalities, public and private transportation providers and social/human service agencies responsible for ensuring that Federal Transit grant funding is spent utilizing local priorities. MTI focuses primarily on the accessibility of transit to persons who have special needs, are low income, disabled or elderly.
3. Ensure coordination between MAT's mobility management program and HUD funded planning and programming within the City of Fargo
4. Increase transit accessibility in the expanding southwest areas of the metropolitan area through implementation of the *Southwest Metro Transit Study*
5. Work in cooperation with the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG) to increase linkages between HUD and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) related planning and programming efforts aimed at increasing transportation options within Fargo and the entire FM Metropolitan area
6. Expand the multi-modal nature of Fargo's transportation network by encouraging bicycle riding and walking as a safe and efficient means of basic transportation

7. Increase the awareness of bicycles as a legitimate form of transportation through the design and construction of paths and bikeways that are accessible to the disabled and all skill levels.
8. Develop initiatives with relevant local stakeholders that build off the recent partnership between US DOT, HUD, and EPA regarding sustainability and livability.

Homelessness

While not an impediment to fair housing on its own, homelessness is the ultimate consequence for any individual or family encountering impediments to fair housing choice. The problem of homelessness in Fargo continues to grow, and minorities and low income persons encounter homelessness disproportionately to the majority population. As discussed earlier in this report, the City has seen an increase in the numbers of homeless, as well as the factors known to contribute to homelessness. The City, through its 10 Year Plan to End Long Term Homelessness, has initiated the following action items to address this problem:

1. Adopt the 10 Year Plan (Fargo City Commission)
2. Implement the IDDT model at the Southeast Human Service Center
3. Develop a Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program
4. Strengthen potential partnerships with area landlords willing to rent to LTH individuals
5. Initiate Project Homeless Connect
6. Support points of outreach
7. Connect healthcare providers with housing resources to minimize discharge to the streets
8. Establish permanent supportive housing options in the community
9. Support the creation of a Transitional Jobs program
10. Create a local homelessness ombudsman through the FM Homeless Coalition
11. Increase the intensity of emergency assistance for families most at-risk homelessness (HPRP)
12. Initiate communication between homeless prevention providers and landlords
13. Support surveys that provide community-level data on homelessness
14. Humanize the issue of homelessness and establish a mindset that believes in ending long-term chronic homelessness

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APPENDIX A - Public Participation

A draft of the 2010 Analysis of Impediments (AI) was presented to the Fargo Human Relations Commission (FHRC) and approved at their meeting on December 1, 2010. The AI was received and filed by the City Commission at their meeting on December 27, 2010. Fargo's AI was presented to the public for a period of 15 days, from October 20th to November 4th, 2010. Presentation of the AI was made to a significant representation of Metro-area stakeholders at the meeting of the Metro Transit Initiative Committee on November 30, 2010. While collecting local data for this report, information and input was sought from a wide variety of groups and agencies that serve low income and minority populations in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

PUBLIC NOTICE Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

The public comment period for reviewing the City of Fargo's updated Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is October 20, 2010 to November 4, 2010. A copy of the report is available at the Department of Planning and Development, 2nd Floor of City Hall, 200 North 3rd Street, Fargo, ND or can be obtained by calling 241-1474. TDD 241-8258.

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